

## CLAIMS

1. A method of bending at least one glass sheet (3) comprising
  - 5     ▪ a step of allowing the glass to sag under gravity; then
  - placing the central region of said one or more sheets (3) in contact with a male former (2) by advancing a female former (4) supporting said sheet toward said male former, said male former (2) being  
10     located above said female former (4) with vertical movement of one with respect to the other being possible in a bending cell (12);
  - then a phase of pressing the glass in its peripheral region between the male former (2) and the female former; then  
15     ▪ a phase of holding the glass against the male former (2) by partial vacuum, pressing being continued; then
  - 20     ▪ discontinuing the pressing by separating the male former from the female former; and then
  - a step of cooling the glass outside the bending cell.
2. The method as claimed in the preceding claim,  
25     characterized in that the gravity-induced sag is mainly cylindrical and in that it leads essentially to a deflection  $f$  approximately equal to the final deflection.
3. The method as claimed in one of the preceding  
30     claims, characterized in that during the separation of the male former from the female former, the glass remains in contact with the male former under the effect of a partial vacuum.
4. The method as claimed in one of the preceding  
35     claims, characterized in that several glass sheets are superposed and are bent at the same time as

each other and in that during the separation of the male former from the female former, the glass remains in contact with the male former under the effect of a partial vacuum at least partly applied through a skirt surrounding the male former.

- 5           5. The method as claimed in either of the two preceding claims, characterized in that while the glass is in contact with the male former under the effect of a partial vacuum, a cooling support is brought under the glass, the partial vacuum is then stopped to allow the glass to rest on said cooling support, and said cooling support then takes the glass away for the cooling step.
- 10           6. The method as claimed in one of the preceding claims, characterized in that during the application of the partial vacuum, positive gas pressure is also applied through the male former in a central region of the glass, said male former being covered with a fibrous material.
- 15           7. The method as claimed in one of the preceding claims, characterized in that the sag is at least partly brought about in a tunnel oven through which the glass is conveyed toward the bending cell, said glass being placed on a sag support.
- 20           8. The method as claimed in one of the preceding claims, characterized in that the sag is at least partly brought about on a sag support occupying an area inscribed entirely, seen from above, within the annular female former, and in that the annular female former moves the glass by rising toward the male former and passing around said sag support.
- 25           9. The method as claimed in either of the two preceding claims, characterized in that the sag support is a skeleton set back by at least 2 cm from the narrow edge of the glass.
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10. The method as claimed in one of the preceding claims, characterized in that the bending is carried out at a temperature of less than 640°C.
- 5 11. A bending system for carrying out the method as defined in one of the preceding claims, comprising an oven (10) in which is a system for transporting the skeleton (5')-supported glass that moves the skeleton to a bending cell (12), said cell comprising a frame or annular female former (4),  
10 the skeleton occupying an area inscribed entirely, seen from above, within the annular female former, and a convex male former (2) located above the annular female former (4), means being provided for discharging the skeletons (5') from the bending  
15 cell, means being provided for moving vertically on the one hand the annular female former (4), and said male former being provided with means capable of applying a partial vacuum through its convex surface.
- 20 12. An application of the method or system of one of the preceding claims to the production of laminated glazing having locally a coefficient of non-developability greater than 2.